U.S. Cites Security in Argument For Secrecy on Glomar Explorer

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President Ford's top national security adviser has testified he is "confident" that disclosure of financial details concerning the operation of the Glomar Explorer ship would "severely damage the foreign relations and national defense of the United States."

Brent Scowcroft said in an affidavit filed in federal court here that official acknowledgment of any particular government agency's participation in the Glomar program might prompt another government to retaliate against the United States.

The Glomar Explorer was built by Howard Hughes' Summa Corp. and financed by the U.S. government. Its first and only reported mission was a partially successful attempt to raise a sunken Soviet submarien from the Pacific Ocean floor.

According to published reports of the mission, the ship was financed through the Central Intelligence Agency. Scowcroft said the government has consistently refused to comment on the truth or accuracy of press reports about the Glomar Explorer, other than to confirm that the U.S. government did own the ship.

The affidavit was filed by Scowcroft in a civil suit in which a privately financed "watchdog" group is seeking access to government contracts and other documents relating to the financing of the ship.

U.S. District Court Judge Gerhard A. Gesell rejected attempts by the government two weeks ago to proceed secretly in the court suit. The Scowcroft affidavit was filed in an attempt to have esell reconsider his ruling.

Scowcroft said the Glomar Explorer project was part of a 1969 "classified United States government program to accomplish certain secret tasks in furtherance of national security objectives of the U.S."